

Chester County, PA — Continuing to meet with organizations throughout the 7th Congressional District, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) attended and spoke at events with the Chester County Fuel Dealers Association and The Arc, an organization providing services for those with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

Congressman Sestak spoke at The Arc's Legislative Breakfast in West Chester. The Arc is part of a national organization that advances public policy advocacy, family training, public awareness, and community resources for the developmentally disabled.

"I have long been committed to addressing the needs of the developmentally disabled," said Congressman Sestak. "As far back as high school I worked with developmentally disabled students at the Don Guanella School. Since my election, I have worked on a number of bills to provide support for the disabled, and in April held a summit on mental health and developmental disabilities with Rep. Patrick Kennedy at the Elwyn vocational rehabilitation center to support his Mental Health Parity legislation. I also enjoyed participating in the "Walk for Our Kids" fundraiser this year to provide resource books, literature and to support new families of children with Down Syndrome."

Congressman Sestak has supported several pieces of legislation to help the developmentally disabled live as independently and productively as possible. With the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act being re-authorized during this Congressional session, Congressman Sestak is working to provide greater flexibility in accountability measures, more appropriate assessments, and greater accommodations for students with disabilities. Congressman Sestak has also signed on as a sponsor of H.R. 627, the Keep our PACT Act, which would fully-fund both the No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by 2014.

"According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 6 million of our schoolchildren receive special education," added Joe. "I strongly support providing the resources necessary to ensure that all children, regardless of their disability, receive a high quality education."

Congressman Sestak discussed other important pieces of legislation to developmentally disabled, including the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, which would create a program to help adults with disabilities to remain independent, employed, and part of their local community; and the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act, which would take important steps to ensure that direct support professionals, such as home aides and personal care assistants are paid wages and benefits that will allow them to stay in their jobs and provide critical services for the disabled population.

Congressman Sestak has also worked to address the health and welfare needs of the developmentally disabled. He has advocated for additional funding the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that provides medical insurance for low-income children, in addition to opposing cuts for Medicaid funding proposed in the President's FY 2008 budget. Additionally, Congressman Sestak is a co-sponsor of H.R. 493, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of genetic testing

of individuals or family members, and keeps insurers from determining health care insurance premiums based on results of genetic tests. Along with Congressman Patrick Kennedy, he supports legislation that would require insurers to provide the same level of mental health coverage as they do medical health.

“Education is one of my four pillars – it’s one of my top priorities in Congress,” stated Congressman Sestak. “As a member of the House Education Committee, my focus is on providing every student – particularly those with disabilities – with the best possible education. We must give them the resources necessary to be independent, employed, and active members of the community.”

Also speaking to the Fuel Dealers Association in Kennett Square this morning, Congressman Sestak discussed his efforts to combat rising gasoline prices and ensure adequate supply as part of his overall approach to national security and helping small businesses.

“National security starts at home, not only with the armed services, but also with a stable energy supply, educated workforce, and thriving small businesses,” stated Congressman Sestak. “In the past six years, 607 small businesses, and one out of every five manufacturing establishments, have been lost locally. I am committed to reversing these losses through fostering entrepreneurial development and creating the right set of conditions to help businesses flourish, stay in and be attracted to the District. Supporting effective small business entrepreneurial development programs is a key part of that strategy.”

Congressman Sestak recently introduced a piece of legislation that was voted through the committee process and will now move to a full vote in the House. The Small Business Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007 (H.R. 2359) - enhances two critical Small Business Administration (SBA) Entrepreneurial Development programs: Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and the Service Corps for Retired Executives (SCORE).

“These Small Business Administration programs are so important to local businesses, which really are the engine of our economy in the Seventh District,” said Congressman Sestak. “We know that entrepreneurial development assistance programs work. Businesses who receive SBA entrepreneurial assistance are twice as likely to succeed. In addition, every federal dollar spent on entrepreneurial development generates seven dollars in increased tax revenue.”

Congressman Sestak has a strong commitment to creating jobs and helping small business. As Vice Chairman of the Small Business Committee, Rep. Sestak has worked to support new and small businesses through open access to loans, credit and capital, advocates fair and true tax

relief for small business, and work to reduce onerous regulations and paperwork. Congressman Sestak cosponsored the Family Small Business Tax Fairness Act (H.R. 868) to streamline small business joint-tax filings. He also voted in favor of the H.R. 976, Small Business Tax Relief Act--a bipartisan bill with \$1.3 billion in tax cuts to help small businesses invest in new equipment and hire new workers.

Congressman Sestak has also taken steps to change Defense contracting to improve cost efficiency and benefit small business. He passed an amendment requiring that large contracts are unbundled to open the bidding process to small businesses. This means that multi-million dollar contracts that previously would have only been available to large companies and corporations are now opened for bidding to small and medium sized businesses.

“These actions in Congress will help all small businesses, including local fuel dealers,” said Congressman Sestak. “As we transition to alternative fuels, we must also ensure a reliable, reasonably priced supply of traditional fuels. That’s why I cosponsored and voted in favor of a bill that would prohibit foreign countries from collectively manipulating energy prices or supplies.”

The bill, “No Oil Producing & Exporting Cartels” or NOPEC would empower the federal government to file antitrust lawsuits in federal district court against countries that collectively set prices for natural gas or petroleum. Specifically, countries could not work collectively to:

- limit the production or distribution of oil, natural gas or petroleum products;
- set the prices of oil, natural gas, or petroleum products; or
- take additional steps that would directly or substantially affect the “market, supply, price, or distribution” of oil, natural gas, or petroleum products.

“Rising gasoline prices don’t only hurt at the pump, but make it increasingly more expensive to heat our homes in the Pennsylvania winter,” Congressman Sestak stated. “We need to make sure that the prices we are charged from abroad for fuel are fair.”

Congressman Sestak has also supported the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act” – HR 1252 – that sets penalties for petroleum price gouging. Penalties are targeted against Big Oil companies that gouge consumers and have more than \$500 million dollars in annual sales – not small businesses such as fuel distributors. Fines collected under this law would be directed to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This program provides low-income families with assistance with their heating bills, a program that also supports local heating fuel dealer and distribution businesses.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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